


Wild ginseng harvest regulations

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius* L.) is an important Missouri forest resource that is harvested and sold for medicinal purposes. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) regulates international trade in certain plant and animal species, including ginseng. In order to be legally exported, ginseng roots must be legally acquired and harvests must not be detrimental to the survival of the species. In Missouri, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is the agency responsible for developing state regulations governing the harvest and sale of wild ginseng to meet the CITES requirements. Our regulations help insure that commerce in Missouri wild ginseng will continue to be allowed.

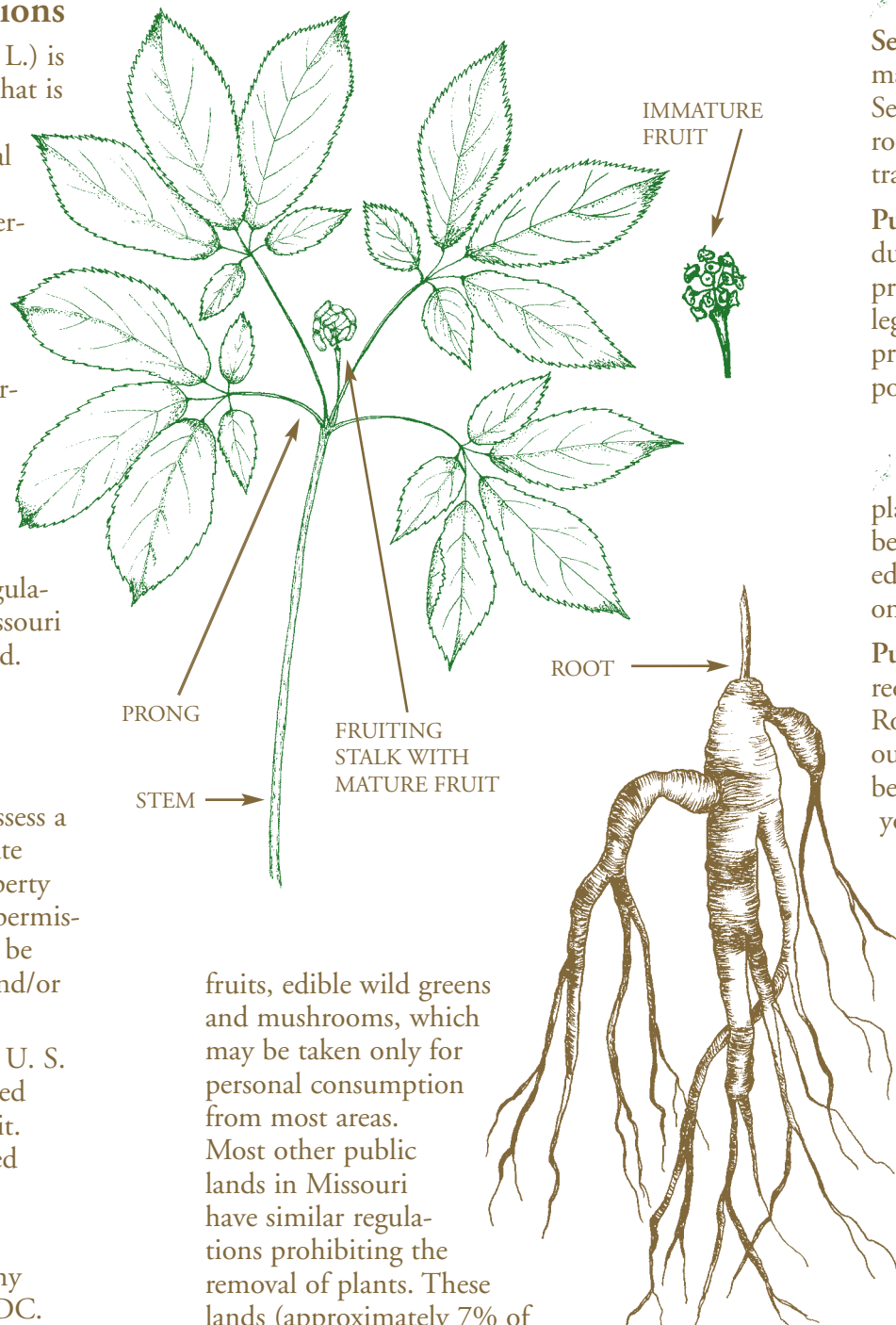
Regulations

In Missouri you are not required to possess a license to harvest wild ginseng on private land. However, you must have the property owner's permission. Without previous permission from the property owner you may be subject to prosecution for trespassing and/or theft.


Harvesting ginseng for personal use on U. S. Forest Service land in Missouri is allowed only with a special Forest Service permit. Harvesting ginseng on most state-owned lands is prohibited.

 It is illegal to harvest ginseng on any property owned or administered by MDC.


Purpose: All plants are protected on MDC lands, with the exception of nuts, berries,




fruits, edible wild greens and mushrooms, which may be taken only for personal consumption from most areas. Most other public lands in Missouri have similar regulations prohibiting the removal of plants. These lands (approximately 7% of Missouri's land area) provide a refuge for ginseng to grow.

 Wild ginseng may be harvested from **September 1 through December 31**, and may be purchased, sold or transported from September 1 through March 15. Certified roots may be possessed, purchased, sold, transported or exported throughout the year.

Purpose: If ginseng is harvested too early during the growing season, it will not have produced viable seeds. Harvesting within the legal ginseng season allows for healthy seed production that can sustain wild ginseng populations.


 Wild and cultivated Missouri ginseng plants or roots exported from the state must be certified by MDC. Roots may be imported from other states, territories or countries only with an appropriate certificate of origin.

Purpose: MDC certifies roots to meet CITES requirements for tracking annual harvests. Roots require certification prior to shipment out of Missouri or if they will be held between March 15 and September 1. Contact your local MDC Conservation Agent to certify roots.

 Harvested ginseng plants or roots must possess at least three true leaves (prongs) or flowering/fruiting stalks. The fruiting stalk and stem, except the mature fruits, must be kept with the plant until it is returned to the harvester's home or place of business. The seeds from each harvested plant must be planted within 100 feet of the parent plant.

Purpose: Ginseng does not produce seeds until it is approximately five years of age. As a plant ages it develops more prongs during the growing season. Three-

pronged plants are usually at least five years old, and have had the chance to reproduce. By harvesting only the plants that have already reproduced and by planting the seeds of harvested plants, you will allow new plants to establish in following years. Fruiting stalks and stems must be temporarily kept with the plants in order to provide proof to law enforcement personnel that only plants of legal age were harvested if roots are checked prior to processing for drying. Once you return home, or to a place of business for selling the roots, you may remove the stems and stalks to prevent the roots from drying improperly.

 Any person, group or business that purchases ginseng in Missouri for resale is considered a Missouri ginseng dealer unless they do not maintain a ginseng business address in Missouri and are registered as a dealer in another state. All Missouri ginseng dealers must register annually with MDC. Dealers must provide quarterly reports of all transactions and an annual inventory report.

Purpose: Registration of ginseng dealers provides MDC with important information about the annual harvest of Missouri's wild ginseng.

Harvest procedures

Harvesters can do their part to insure that ginseng hunting is a sustainable enterprise. Use common sense when collecting any wild plants. Collect only from areas where several large plants are growing. Be sure to leave many plants behind in order to maintain a healthy future population.

Do not disturb the young plants—allow the plants time to contribute their seed to future ginseng crops. Harvesting plants with fewer than three true leaves (prongs) is illegal and is detrimental to the ginseng population. Furthermore, young ginseng plants do not produce roots with high commercial value. The roots of larger, older plants are more valuable and contain a higher concentration of ginsenosides, the main active ingredient. Always plant the mature seeds from the ginseng you harvest. Squeeze the seeds from the red fruits and plant them at least 6 inches apart and about one-half inch deep. Cover the seeds with leaf litter. Ginseng requires a very specific habitat, so plant the seeds within 100 feet from where the parent plant was harvested. By planting the seeds, you will help reestablish the ginseng patch.

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